

ALLOWANCE

Acknowledgments

1. In the reply, filed on October 29, 2010, Applicant cancelled claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 13, and 16.
2. Applicant added new claim 23.

Examiner's Amendment

3. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

In regards to the Abstract, Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure: The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided.

Hence, in the Abstract (line 9), the term "ratchet means" is changed to "a ratchet".

In the Abstract (line 11), the term "clutch means" is changed to "a clutch".

Reasons for Allowance

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

In regards to independent claim 2, the prior art of record does not disclose or render obvious at the time the invention was made the combination as claimed, specifically including a piston rod that is rotatable in only one direction relative to a housing, an insert located in the

housing threadedly engaged with the piston rod, a ratchet associated with the insert configured to allow the piston rod to rotate only in a single direction through the insert, and a drive sleeve which is axially displaceable but not rotatable with respect to the piston rod.

The closest prior art of record Burroughs (US 6,221,046) teaches a piston rod (leadscrew [38]) that is not rotatable with respect to an insert (ledges [178][180]) since ratchet means (flexible tangs [182][184]) of the insert prevent the piston rod from rotating. Said ratchet means only prevent axial movement of the piston rod in the proximal direction instead of preventing rotational movement of the piston rod in the proximal direction. And the drive sleeve (nut [36]) is rotatable with respect to the piston rod [38]. Even though all of the elements of the claimed invention are known in the art, it would not have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the piston rod, insert, ratchet means, and drive sleeve to perform the functions or be in the particular orientation as recited in the claim, as such would destroy the functionality of the elements in Burroughs making the device unsuitable for its intended purpose. There does not appear to be a motivation in the prior art of record to modify Burroughs to arrive at Applicant's claimed invention.

Dependent claims 3, 4, 7-9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 23 are allowed by virtue of being dependent upon allowable independent claim 2.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SHEFALI D. PATEL whose telephone number is (571) 270-3645. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 8am-5pm Eastern time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kevin C. Sirmons can be reached on (571) 272-4965. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Shefali D Patel/
Examiner, Art Unit 3767
11/3/2010

/KEVIN C. SIRMONS/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3767

Application/Control Number: 10/790,025
Art Unit: 3767

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